

HER FATHER'S TRIBUTE

A Memorial of

ELIZABETH GRAHAM COLTON

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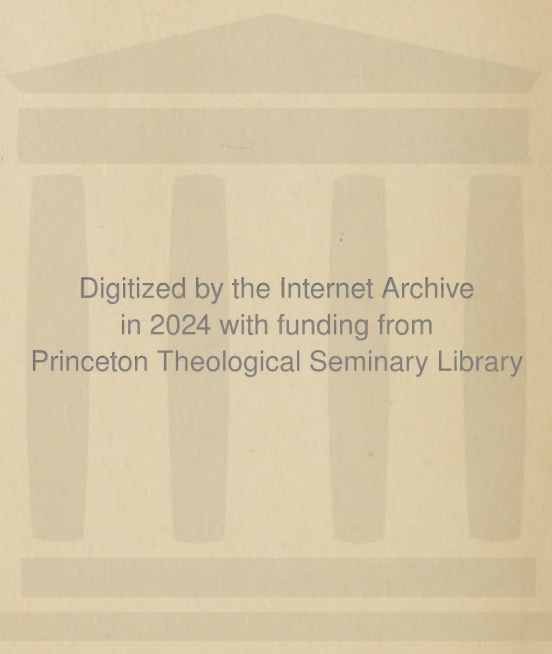
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Her father's tribute; a
memorial of Elizabeth



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HER FATHER'S TRIBUTE



ELIZABETH GRAHAM COLTON

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Her Father's Tribute

A MEMORIAL OF ✓
ELIZABETH GRAHAM COLTON

By ✓
E. T. COLTON

With Introduction by
JOHN R. MOTT



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INTRODUCTION

FOR the personality of Elizabeth Colton to be known and to live in ever widening circles beyond those immediate to her will be good for the world of youth and of older folks. The pages that follow are freighted for such a mission. In them live on contagiously the beauty and strength of a character rich in the qualities that charm, cheer, and create wherever they are resident.

Elizabeth was born in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, September 10th, 1906. Twenty years passed, given, as normally, to making out by successive choices and influences the mold of life. The result is a pattern of beauteous design that was in the process of being executed with inspiring fidelity.

The materials, tools, and workshops were generous natural endowments; a home of high ideals and wide horizons;

INTRODUCTION

the privileges of a favored suburban community in the New York metropolitan district; two years in South Dakota with its great open spaces and expansive spirit during the family's war time service; Germany in 1922-1923, the first year under private teachers in Berlin, the second in a select Weimar boarding school with liberal European travel; Northfield Seminary in Massachusetts for the next two and a half years. A second period for study in Europe had just been entered upon beginning at Paris, where, what seems to us mortals untimely death found her December 20th, 1926.

Friends and associates of the author have often urged him to employ in the direction of permanent literature his gifts for writing. They will sorrow with him in having the first such expression from his pen called forth out of pain but will find comfort also with him and for all who suffer in the triumphant realities of the spirit here recorded. Although composed with an intimacy meant only for those close to Elizabeth and to the family, this

INTRODUCTION

memorial of love has meaning for a multitude of young and old, and under persuasion consent has been won to release it more widely as a beacon of spiritual light in a materialistic age.

"Her Father's Tribute," simply as an interpretation and appreciation of a lovely daughter's life, abundantly rewards reading and remembering. And it is profoundly more. It is a clear, compelling witness borne to the worth of oncoming youth; to glowing filial and parental love in a day when that flame burns low at many hearthsides; to the surprise of finding love yet ampler when released from the limitations of form and the senses; and to the beneficence with which the laws of suffering are upheld.

JOHN R. MOTT.

CONTENTS

I

PORTRAIT.....	11
---------------	----

II

LOYALTIES.....	23
----------------	----

III

THE CROSS.....	33
----------------	----

IV

THE GARDEN.....	41
-----------------	----

I

PORTRAIT

*"April came to bloom and never dim December
Breathed its killing chills upon the head or heart."*

I

PORTRAIT

FAIR without and within"—her pastor's letter read. "We are grateful that you gave us Elizabeth."

One sight of the arresting countenance was rarely enough. People in public would turn to look again. Speakers at the school assemblies perceived her face out in the sea of faces. Teachers found in its appeal and response incentive to be and give their best. "Only one other face have I ever seen as beautiful," a mature friend writes, and adds, "It will never be possible to think unkindly or to live selfishly when I remember her." The haunting loveliness was accentuated by the last weeks of illness, and won from the family keeping the pension where these were spent reference to her among themselves as "The Angel."

But if the imagery of the kindly French

folk who so expressed their love suggests unearthly characteristics, it is better forgotten for that of a student chum, companion in innocent escapades and a thousand common joys of girlhood, who knew her as "a glorious symbol of life."

A diary kept through the years sparkles with action, gayety, and fun:

"The best dancer since St. Vitus."

"Tommy drove 75 + an hour."

"Charley's Aunt — Syd Chaplin —
Cameo Theatre—A Riot."

"Mount Hermon Field Day. Big Time!
Great Day. Pinned on ribbons with Peg.
Big Time!!"

The vanity box was requisitioned, of course, in gilding the lily, powder for universal service, and, for "heavy engagements," rouge. Work about the home was likely to be done to such syncopated measures as "Horses" and "Valencia," or the "Prisoner's Song." Other jazzy moods for expression taxed in turn the resources of piano, victrola, "sax," "uke," and radio. An orchestral equipment traveled along to school, on vacations and

over the seas, that rivaled Nebuchadnezzar's ensemble of "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music." A made-in-Germany portable phonograph went everywhere, sometimes to bed, had a mileage outrunning the most enduring tires, and ceased to entertain only when it fell apart.

The joy of living existed, however, apart from artificial stimulation. It had inner springs. The joke department of the school paper fell to her editorship. The faculty member announcing the selection described the position as one "that calls for good taste and a merry heart." Hard indeed the way that was not lighted up with a laugh. The first letter after a September leave taking to go back to study ran, "I certainly hated to see you walk out of my sight last Monday noon. Something near a total eclipse came over my vision of the coming months. Putting it in the words of a late advertisement, 'All alone' again. The trip was quite regular—forty minutes late." A spring term return was reported on the

first day of the fourth month, "Your April Fool arrived safely and is now back in the routine of the bell system"—a thrust against the regular regime, which always irked a bit. Banished as amateur saxaphonist to the basement in order not to disturb the other students, she "felt like a Jew trying to get into Harvard." (It was the year when Semitism was agitating academic circles.) In the general country store, "The candy tasted like kerosene and horse collars." Premonitions of a debacle in algebra were accounted for by "not being born with a mean proportional."

Mathematical deficiencies were compensated by love and aptitude for good literature which appeared early with promise of creative talent. The growing library of her independent choices knew such names as Moliere, Oscar Wilde, Ibsen, William James, Swinburne, and Maeterlinck. She wrote of reading *Peer Gynt* under the bed clothes after "lights out": "It was hot but I was riding on the clouds."

One evening in the family living-room

the heart to heart questions, "What inner urge is strongest in you? What of all things would you like most to do?" brought the instant answer, "Appear as contributor in a good magazine." Class papers often received recognition modestly disclaimed as "Not deserved. They write themselves."

Humor bubbled up into rhymes with surprise shot in as a favorite trick:

"Let's leave the cold glare of the city
And the street lights' insolent stare
For a shady path in the park
And join the lovers there."

"My sweet, you really care," said he.

"Yes, but hasten," was her plea.

"I have a hole in my stocking,
And it's run clear to my knee."

Free verse was composed for pastime. One of these efforts was dedicated to a youth toward whom romance had budded without blooming:

Your attraction
Is like the scent
Of a perfume bottle

HER FATHER'S TRIBUTE

That is empty.
Loving you
Is like playing
On a violin
With muted strings
For you are
A slender vase
Holding a rose
That is dead.

This contribution was accepted by the
school monthly:

Yellow slickers,
Crackling, shiny slickers
Dotting chapel hill.
Forms bent against
The cutting wind
And the rain.
Into the cold, gray stone
Go yellow slickers
And the rain
Softens into harmony
With the music within
Waiting for yellow slickers
To appear again.

A Merkbuch für Theater and Konzerts
kept since 1922 registers the growth of her
artistic appreciations. Scores of operas,

interspersed with drama now and then, enjoyed in Weimar, Berlin, Vienna, Milan, New York, and Paris are in the record. The observations made varyingly in German, French, and English—"Marguerite especially petite," "The overture of The Meistersinger was really brilliantly played"—amplify with time and gain in discrimination. Many of the great arias became familiar possessions of the small sweet voice and ear of rare fidelity. The Passion Play was "unforgettable." She prized the friendships made with the Oberammergau players and other artists and renewed them when they visited America. The Metropolitan, the Louvre, and the galleries of Dresden and Florence, too, had been laid under tribute. A personal collection of prints, etchings, and drawings of the masters was having constant accessions. Little adventures with pencil were essayed on her own account.

She lived in a world of beauty. Childhood letters tell of the all-green prairie, rainbows, wonderful sunsets, and star-filled skies. In the last earthly days Paris

lit the bridges of the Seine for her delight. On a voyage described in a published story, "Waves were running high. Again and again the green water crashed upon the deck. A sudden rush of pride rose in their hearts for this majestic monster, relentlessly plunging her bow into the rising walls of water, now quivering from the awful blows of the sea; now steadying herself with the grace of a poised woman. The wandering searchlight displayed here and there nebulous pools of emerald whisked into shreds of spray."

Sleep came in gorgeous trappings:

"The night has drawn her silken veil
around her

And laid her down on couch of purpling
hue.

Dark lids drooping, white limbs gleam-
ing

Midst cushions black, sunset gold and
orange

Shot with threads of daylight's fading
blue.

Then over all comes languorous sleep,
Treading softly lest he wake his mistress
sweet,

Bringing with him rest, peace
—And dreams of you."

The letter of a room mate draws together into a sketch of living likeness the lines of this rich nature revealed in two and a half years of intimacy:

"Libby singing at the breadmaking, 'dummy work' in the kitchen (a mysterious phrase fashioned to comprehend all school self-help duties)—a pickle purloined between loaves; hurrying to catch up with some lonesome looking girl—she was so marvelously kind to me, greenest and most lonesome of new ones; taking off a certain teacher's swagger; hiking across country on a Sunday afternoon; cutting out scrap pictures from *Vogue* and jokes from *College Humor*, and then reading aloud the 'Life of Bismarck'; presiding over a *Tau Pi* meeting, giving easily and brilliantly a topic on 'La Duse,' whose career manifestly intrigued her; watching a high moon sailing behind swift clouds that cast shadows over our snowy campus; planning with me to spend one of our summers in Labrador with Dr. Grenfell."

“At Northfield there was absolutely no one better liked, more respected, and more superbly unconscious of her popularity, for which all of us loved her twice as much.

“We wondered, too, at the cultural capacity—far beyond our tastes, it seemed, until it grew to attract us, just as much as the rare, loving pranks she was always contemplating to the delight of the whole of Gould. Many are the times I’ve wished we could have produced the fascinating musical comedy that was to mildly satirize school life which we spent hours in the dark giggling over. I thank her for my enjoyment of Moliere, and what little I know of modern poetry, and for my growing interest in sculpture.”

“A spirit of this sort was too contagious not to have a very gracious effect. Life was less a boarding-house affair and more of a home her way. It is very hard to stop writing. Her world was ‘so full of such a great number of things’ and as she finished the rhyme for herself, hers was ‘a happiness much greater than kings.’”


II

LOYALTIES

*"To the days
High pledge of loyalty she gave—
A pledge wrought out through joy in beauty,
And in friends, and questing for the truth."*

II

LOYALTIES

O this father, the glory of his child is that she gave the joy bestowed by those who, loving and accepting the gifts of life, repay in kind. He is grateful, too, for a memory untraced by one serious concern for the course this shining character took through the treacherous channels of current thought and conduct in this present time, when youth faces now in the teens the fundamental choices parents formerly had until maturity to make.

Response to idealism was instinctive. Of a teacher she writes: "No one here has so challenged me to the right as she. I feel I just can't do anything underhanded, and, strange to say, I have no desire to do it with her as my example." Her life was something without sham or pretense. The steady light of those eyes shone from the high altar of honor. There seemed no

hiding place for follies and mistakes. They came out. A head teacher and an aunt had the duty to report a reckless prank the girl figured in during parental absence on a foreign service. They were not quick enough. When they came she had already made her own tearful confession, vows, and peace.

The severest rebuke it ever seemed necessary to inflict on another occasion brought back this: "I thank you from the depths of my heart, Dad, for calling me to task and I hope you will do it in every little thing which demands it. I need it more than anything else. I only pray God that some day you may say (requoting language in which confidence in her had been inscribed in an early birthday gift Bible) 'Many daughters have done virtuously but thou excellest them all.' "

The only response such loyalty could call forth from love went back to her. Then she wrote, "Father, such a wonderful new meaning has come to that name since I received your letter. Everything

LOYALTIES

else seems so trivial. My cares are all such little things, now that you have reached down your hand for me to grasp. I don't deserve to be forgiven. You can't realize how your strength is helping me. 'Play the game,' is my motto now."

This sense of personal responsibility found consistent expression. Scarcely more than a baby, she enlisted loyally in an older brother's defense against young warring neighbors. One of her first teachers, a cousin, remembers still "the little girl who loved to help with busy work for school. Nine years ago she was with me, and on my Christmas program sang, 'O, Little Town of Bethlehem.' I am sure her soul is as pure and beautiful as then. Looking back I can think of nothing unpleasant in all those months. She was always smiling, always willing."

And the "little girl" was writing to her father in Russia about the same cousin:

"Winifred is not going to be married now. Lester has enlisted in the Navy and is at Great Lakes Training Camp.

HER FATHER'S TRIBUTE

Yesterday was her wedding date. She even had her invitations ordered. I certainly hope he can be spared to make her happy.

"I think I am doing my bit. I have worked in the garden and planted half of it, raised two hundred chickens and fifty ducks, besides giving you up for ten months,—and my pony—and buying war savings stamps."

Like gold her allegiances wore more lustrously to the end. Posted in private papers, with the finality of a life commission, are the words: "A need known with ability to meet the need is a call." The conviction was coined into life. Elective and voluntary school offices were taken on the devoted, capable shoulders until the undertakings numbered twelve which, with her studies, were so much beyond the endowment of physical strength that withdrawal from school was necessary midway of the junior year.

Again the paradox of saving life by losing it. The witnesses are comrades in and out of school, her principal and

teachers, traveling companions, casual acquaintances, family friends, colleagues:

"The thought of her has been refining."

"She made this depressing old earth a bit better."

"Everything that a girl should be. Every one loved her."

"I would be very happy should our own daughter become such a gracious character."

"Oh, Mother, I would love to be like Elizabeth. Wasn't she the friendliest girl?"

"So full of life and fun but always willing to do whatever the rest of the party wished. And so lovely it was a pleasure to look at her."

"How many of us there are here who are the richer for having known her."

"What glorious times we had together, always happy when she was around."

From Dresden, "It was a great pain for me and all the girls who knew my dearest Elizabeth that she must go so early from us."

"The memory of those lovely years will carry me when the way is hardest."

"We knew her enough to be won."

"I am rich in remembrances of her. The sweetness of her face and manner was but radiance of the life."

"The most beautiful friendship I've known. If ever I wanted help, advice, a little cheering up, sympathy or to confide to some one, I sought none other. The place can never be taken by another. It is that indescribable place which comes next to one's mother."

"Her personality was something worth striving to equal—a challenge to do your best. There was unselfishness such as I have never known before."

"She grew such a part of me I quote her every day and will."

"I thank God for her life, so radiant, so unselfish, so thoughtful, so prepared for the abundant entrance upon joyous and unfettered service."

If in retrospect the mind rests with grateful pride on the integrity and grace of the young life, affection lays abiding hold on the precious communion that twenty years made indissoluble, which

what is called death proves impotent even to arrest. With her advent came the suffusing, masculine tenderness known only to a man when his arms receive his own girl child. From that day another human love began that remained central to happiness. I asked for her the name she adorned. The offering of her infant prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep" was a music never recalled without emotion. Another memory of fadeless purity is of her waking from a Sunday morning nap in May among dogwood blossoms which while she slept had been gathered and placed to half conceal the small fenced-in bed.

The interplay of trust and admiration grew with the passing years. Which of us meant more to the other is as easily told as whether loving or being loved is better. Evidently we hid the truth badly if the observation of one dear friend be typical: "I do not believe I ever saw a more beautiful relationship between father and daughter. We had only to watch you to know what was in your heart, and

Elizabeth always spoke with irrepressible pride of you."

For us life offered more absences than presences in the flesh. The self-denial it cost was rewarded in part by the freshness, charm, and fidelity of her correspondence. One can go long and far in the strength of a spiritual union of such reality: "I had been thinking of you all day and when your letter came to-night it was devoured. You and Mother are so good to me and made my vacation such a happy one. I only hope I may in some way merit it all. The knowledge of your faith in me though, Father, will be a source of inspiration. I never think of you as far away but right near me where I can talk to you and tell you my petty troubles and foolish joys. One of the moments that stand out during my time at home is the evening you read that Russian poetry to me. It meant so many things. God bless you and keep you. I promise you I will be the best daughter I know how to be until you come back, I love you so."

III

THE CROSS

*“Whether ’tis ampler day divinelier lit
Or homeless night without?”*

III

THE CROSS

THESE intimacies mark the way to the place of "crucifixion." Offence will not be taken at this allusion used by one deeply conscious that human pain in its extremity is not to be associated with what "He suffered there." Here it symbolizes simply the supreme experience of suffering by a man who thirty-eight years ago accepted life at its best as sacrificial and, even before this event, supposed he knew something of bearing crosses.

The latter years had brought clearly to view the pre-eminent talents with which Elizabeth was endowed. Absence of both interest and aptitude for mathematics and the sciences gave college the prospect of a treadmill, while artistic gifts, suppressed in the parents by poverty and pioneering, were claiming their rights in the child.

There had come to be but one fair answer to the straightforward reasoning, "I have something to offer others have not. Why not develop that?"

Contact with Continental life at its best during the period of post war suffering had given in her middle teens awareness of the spiritual inheritances of the Old World. Kinship with them was felt through international schoolmates in an atmosphere laden with the intellectual and artistic traditions of Goethe, Schiller, and Liszt. Proficiency in German conversation was attained and that literature opened to reading for pleasure and instruction. Small journeys about Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Holland and England were windows opening on other treasures that never ceased beckoning back to be known and culturally possessed. An eager heart was set on another two years in Europe, beginning with Paris to perfect the French language. Then some art and more music, and, if love called, a home of her own and children. (They drew about her as to a magnet.)

On such a mission the "Carmania" carried her away a September night, with Mother and Sister, too. Flowers, telegrams, and other steamer farewells and the prospect of what was ahead had set the joyous being singing rapturously. Out on a high deck as the ship slipped her moorings and pushed astream the radiant figure stood, seeing nothing nearer than the stars, so possessed by happiness that the tears of one who saw the vision from shore were of thanksgiving that life affords experiences lacking nothing in spiritual beauty.

In January he who had so greatly rejoiced four months before stood aboard another Atlantic liner in the Cherbourg night as lonely guard of love and honor in a driving Channel rain, while the same form, inanimate and confined, was lowered to the hold to be borne toward a hillside for repose near the place where the twenty treasured years began.

Two weeks after her landing in France, appendicitis had struck savagely at depleted powers, for the abounding life was

of the spirit, not of the body—a fact true, indeed, for several years, though well concealed from friends and much too little recognized at home. Any want of physical reserve seemed inconsonant with her outdoor passion for horsemanship, and the red-coated figure at the wheel of her roadster, flashing over the summer roads of Jersey, New York, and the Berkshires.

The battle with disease presented the choice of issues—operate under fair conditions for winning, or wait and invite a recurring and almost certainly fatal onslaught. The former was chosen. The result is told by four cables:

December 16th, 1926

“Operation successful.”

December 17th

“Elizabeth’s condition very serious, holding her own, however.”

December 19th

“Condition slightly improved.”

December 20th

“After consultation best surgeons a serious complication necessitated second operation. Everything possible done.

Elizabeth passed away peacefully today."

In one small world that day, the earth rocked and darkness covered the land. Could such an event have meaning and ministry in terms of intelligence and love?


IV

THE GARDEN

*“Now in the place where He was crucified,
there was a garden.”*

IV

THE GARDEN

FTER the rites in the American Church in Paris, the much loved Rector of another Communion, who read the service, whispered to us aside, "It is well." One could take the word on faith out of esteem borne a friend of many years and minister to the bereft throughout his lifetime of pastorates, only, with the reservation made by some old time hearers of great spiritual truth, "It is a hard saying." Yet he was on known ground, this father of seven, with one of his own in the invisible throng—and the exquisitely sweet-faced mother standing by corroborated the claim.

Among other sustaining words that came were some with insight all their own from two younger friends, with whom, also, there were many mutual bonds. Though without kinship of blood, they had given their first boy our family name. Well grown toward satisfying promise, he,

too, had gone suddenly on the great adventure two years before. These parents reported from the country of experience where "the roots of joy are intertwined with pain," and these were the tidings: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass," to make what is living to go on with growing. "Yes, we know."

That was in the time of the northern winter. To-day is Easter. Multitudes filled the churches this morning and overflowed into the out-of-doors—witnessing, it may be ventured, consciously or not, to the welcome the Resurrection message receives over that of every other truth of Christianity, even that of the Advent. Trinity worshipers in Boston were protected by the police from dangerous overcrowding. From Old South other hundreds were turned away. The most privileged of our population do not so congregate to be told again the spiritual meaning of the Christmas festival. Problems lie heavily on the world of men and women that make the fact of victory over the work of death great good news.

Since December, with its threat to freeze the very heart of the Universe, another sorrow-sown garden is springing under the vernal order of the spiritual world. The confusion and depression from stunned parental pride, thwarted desires and plans for a loved one, and the impulses to self-pity are yielding place to knowledge that suffering in one form or another falls rather evenly on mankind. The distinguishing matter is discovered to be not visitation or immunity, but what pain, with its sure overtaking of us is allowed to do—infect, embitter, and impoverish or refine, enrich, and elevate. Christian recognition that the choice of results is ours to make individually calms rebellion. And more, from among the most sorely smitten are those who have journeyed farthest from the shadows of their grief, such as can call back across the darkness: "I know every foot of the way you must travel. All I can say from experience is that at its end there is a subdued but wonderfully healing Light."

Life's values are being seen in dependable perspective. When earthly loveliness, nourished with affection and delight, is so pitilessly destroyed, trust in anything mortal goes. That the estate of the senses is to be parted with in the end is apprehended with finality. However preciously held, it will slip from the grasp. There is then less habitual resistance to assigning what is material to the appointed place in the scheme of things. Thus painfully the vagrant feet of man are guided, lest he utterly lose the way to the secure possessions of the life of the spirit.

The range and depth of friendship unbelievably increase. The company of the suffering is innumerable. The members have the gifts of mutual discovery and ministry which yield them new and wondrous fellowships along the *Via Dolorosa*. How close some souls chosen and proved of old become is equally unimaginable until, overtaken with disaster, one instantly turns to them, and already they are at the place of need.

Thus knowledge that "love never fails" reaches certitude.

The family as sanctuary has larger meaning. Motherhood is seen in a light which helps one understand why the office is held divine—its desperate resourcefulness and tenacity in waging against death contest for the life of a child; the sheer inability to accept a fatal issue; the poignancy of the pain of separation when a form her own body has fashioned is committed to earth; the superhuman rally back to self-forgetting vigilance over the ones left visible in the flock. Truly here resides some trust from the Creator, other than physical, essential to the keeping of the human race. It is for men to bow before, though they may neither approach nor comprehend.

The latent powers of loyalty, tenderness, and strength in the other children emerge in fortifying fashion and measure. The younger daughter has grown years in womanly stature in as many months. The son, just a year past majority, so met the tests of reliant manhood that the

journey of the parents onward is taken up with knowledge that later years of dependence will be attended by one eager and able to be leaned upon. Instead of contracting, the circle of the home has actually expanded. One and another have been added. They were discerned suffering equally with us, bearing toward our own the same great love wherewith we loved her. With such our hearts evermore are mystically one.

The most precious fact of this record is that spiritual companionship has survived physical dissolution and lives on, more gloriously. The greatest gain is found in the place of greatest loss.

Nothing taught in a life born and nurtured in Christian faith was a preparation for this experience. Probably personal neglect accounts for the surprise, for the concerns of a lifetime have been the current business of the Kingdom on earth, with scarcely a thought of the future life, immortality or any "other worldliness."

Breaking in upon the period of bleak desolation, the personality of Elizabeth

clearly communicated to my consciousness, when fully awake, without the exercise of vision or audition, "I am here, Father." The contact was with that of vibrant, radiant, happy, contagious being. This sense of presence was not a passing one. The grave is distinctly the place where she is not. The former joys known together are made new and enhanced. Fellowship heightens at the times and places that yielded her largest satisfactions in the round of work and play. The experience progressively rises in quality in the presence of God's greater works of harmony, power, and order; and in the higher ranges of His worship and service.

In very truth I know her better, more admiringly, with fuller understanding, and more reality of possession. The defects of knowledge and training once magnified in the moods of parental discipline are swallowed up in the blaze of virtues as spots on the sun. All that was best known and loved is heightened in grace and lustre. Light falling here and there on areas of character unknown and

otherwise unknowable reveal beauties that in the closest intimacies of father and child were kept behind the veil of flesh. Rhymes of girlish romance in "The Uncollectible Works of Elizabeth Colton" are sanctifying revelations of a maiden's heart. Insights given there to unspoken ideals and ambitions quicken the spirit into emotions and resolves such as are inspired in the presence of holiness. Those silent, imperishable records of response to the Inner Voice generate a reverence approaching that which the faithful give the chalice.

The many necessary absences of other years are at an end. Then one of us generally was away. I, in Europe or somewhere about this continent; she off to school in Massachusetts. The thrill of sharing in the throng at Grand Central Station welcoming the train loads of incoming students home for vacations was short lived, for the trains took her away again, and the stretches between were long. When she sailed in September it was to be for a full year apart at least.

But since December I have her, not at the distance between office and suburban home, nor from Northfield to New York, nor from France to America, nor yet out in some vague, distant, astral space. Yes, here and now, mine—sweet, strong, buoyant, exalted, unbound by time or space or pain or lack of understanding. Unmistakably the communion is with the same known personality, only now with the nature of the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Perfect, the Eternal ascendant.

On reflection, there should not be surprise at this sense of continuity and of her gloriousness. At twelve the child was "trusting Him to bring father safely home to her." Four years later in another land she found the German forms of worship "not quite so interesting as ours but hitting the spot." Later the school girl wrote: "The other night in chapel, while praying, I seemed to receive a message that God would make your work successful and shorten the time, until you return to us." To the young woman grown the mountains surrounding Lake George were

“the kind David must have known when he wrote, ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help,’ ” and the little stone chapel at Silver Bay proved “another citadel of strength” where “from the morning service so perfectly conducted * * * until the closing dedication * * * faith in God seemed to possess us and fill us with courage and power—a confirmed faith in God and in one another to carry on.”

These are the outward expressions of a consistent inner life, warm with filial, human love, and following along the way of One who knew “that He came from God and went to God.” To followers He gave pledge that the end of the earthly road would be where He is—with God, everywhere Source of life. Once God has been disassociated from geography, why is not companionship of richer spiritual content precisely the experience to be expected when, upon the life of these larger dimensions, enters one practiced in knowing Him and His ways not as afar off? In any case it is here testified that what has come

to pass between daughter and father has made, for him, disbelief or doubt of immortality on some such terms not merely difficult but impossible.

One word was never missing from the closing subscription to her letters. They might end "lovingly," "gratefully," "devotedly." Invariably there was the vow, "always." The last one came posthumously. It was written for Christmas arrival, unconsciously a perfect self-revelation. Shirking nothing, she had chosen the hazard of the surgeon with brave resolution. The smiles were there. Playfully she spoke of the sombre robed nurses as "black crows." There was concern for being "such an expensive daughter," and tenderer words for keeping in the heart to which they were confided.

Ten days later she went out from her mother's arms in ecstasy. That was as she lived among us, giving herself wholly to her visions.

A classmate just reports from the Kenya highlands of Africa: "I shall never forget the night she left school. As we

all gathered to say good-bye, her spirit radiated a more beautiful light than usual and her face shone." Then the letter envisages the present voyaging forth:

"The news is stifling. We think of the rare power stilled, and all the laughter she would have found for the people, which now they will never know. But then the sun comes out. She has gone on with the youth with whom in spirit she belonged. There can be no dimming of the freshness and ardor and achievement that were hers. She abides in the features of eternal youth, bright and glowing in the devotion of itself to the fulfillment of its own nature which one way or another is the saving of the world."

So she is keeping faith with him who loves her and knows he in turn is loved endlessly in fulfillment of the prophecy and the pledge doubly sealed in the last penned words, "Always, always, Elizabeth."

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